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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 15th
ELECTION, TRANSPARENCY; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: The major themes in today's editorials included the formation of the next government and the results of the December 15 election.

In Ad-Dustoor's fifth page editorial, "National Considerations before Election Results," Mahmoud Al-Shamri argues that the current situation in Iraq, burdened by sectarian division, requires a government founded upon national unity rather than a government determined by election results. Al-Mada's sixth page unattributed editorial, "Politicians Are a Source of Public Concern," criticizes the politicians who are driving the political scene towards a crisis without concern for people's desire to lead normal lives. And independent Az-Zaman published a fourth page editorial titled "Don Quixote and the Wind Mills" in which the author criticizes the sectarian lobbying that took place during the elections and continues to occur today. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[1A.](#) "Death Certificate for Cairo Conference Agreement" (Al-Basaer, affiliated with the Muslim Scholars' Association, published a front-page unattributed editorial about the Cairo Conference for Iraqi reconciliation. The editorial reads in part)

"The criminal and inhumane acts practiced by the authorities are considered a death certificate for the agreement that was reached at the Cairo Reconciliation Conference. For many Iraqis, the conference offered hope for a reduction in the violence and evil that started in the country at the beginning of the occupation and continues today. If only there were good intentions and the general interest would come before personal interests-but that is a dream that will not come true. This indicates that some of the groups that participated in the Cairo Conference were neither serious in their commitments nor genuine in their desire to end terrorism."

[1B.](#) "Accepters and Rejecters" (Al-Mashriq, independent, published a front-page editorial by Dr. Hameed Abdullah about the honesty of the elections. The editorial reads in part)

"Between the rejecters' statements and the accepters' replies concerning the honesty of the elections, the Iraqi citizen continues to wait for the end of the battle. The Iraqi citizen spent all of his life involved in wars-first due to the rulers' foolishness, another time due to large countries' conspiracies, and a third time due to politicians' eagerness for power. All of that is because of oil; if our country was not full of oil, no one would be interested."

[1C.](#) "People Always the Victims" (Al-Bayyna Al-Jadeedah, affiliated with the Shiite Political Council, published a front-page unattributed editorial about the violence. The editorial reads in part)

"The Iraqi-Iranian war lasted eight years without any change in the political map for either country. If all areas that claim to be resisting kill half of the Shiite citizens in the south, would that change the balance or would the Ba'thists regain power? And if the Kurds do their best, would they make Kurdistan an independent state? And if the Shiites have all of the authority and wealth in southern Iraq, would they be able to establish a practical government or a state that contains a variety of ethnicities and sects? Let the reasonable men think and figure out that there is no way but to accept the reality and reject the principle of excluding others. The incessant blind violence is considered

the beginning of the end for a country called Iraq."

1D. "National Project"

(Al-Adala, affiliated with SCIRI, published a second-page editorial by Dr. Ali Khalaif about the establishment of a national unity government. The editorial reads in part)

"The democratic changes in Iraq over the past three years make everybody optimistic about the future of the political process in the new Iraq, as opposed to what the negative media describes. [The media] attempts to show the negative more than the positive. Certainly the establishment of the new government, which will perform based on the constitution that Iraqis voted for, will be a major factor in eliminating any enemy of the new Iraq. The agreement by the patriotic groups on a joint vision for establishing a national unity government will be the real end for the terrorists. A joint vision will serve the people and work for the country's interest."

KHALILZAD